

Message Text

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67

ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4801

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PLAB, FR

SUBJECT: OTTO KERSTEN VISITS PARIS

1. OTTO KERSTEN, SECRETARY GENERAL OF ICFTU, PAID A 24-HOUR VISIT TO PARIS 8 SEPTEMBER FOR THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF CALLING ON M'BOW, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF UNESCO.

2. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF LABOR REPORTERS (AJIS), KERSTEN MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) HIS CALL ON BOW WAS TO EXPRESS ICFTU CONCERN ABOUT RECENT TRENDS IN UNESCO, ENGINEERED BY THE COMMUNIST COUNTRIES WITH THE HELP OF THIRD WORLD MEMBERS. HE REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO PAST RESOLUTIONS UNFRIENDLY TO ISRAEL AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT FORTHCOMING UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE WILL AVOID REPETITION OF EVENTS AND RESOLUTIONS WHICH MARKED LAST GENERAL

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CONFERENCE.

(B) KERSTEN REPORTED THAT THE UNESCO DIRECTOR GENERAL LISTENED SYMPATHETICALLY TO THE ICFTU POINT OF VIEW AND AGREED TO A FUTURE MEETING WITH KERSTEN ACCCOMPANIED BY ANDRE BERGERON OF FORCE OUVRIERE AND THE PRESIDENT OF ISRAEL'S HISTADRUT.

(C) REGARDING CGT'S INTEREST IN AFFILIATING WITH ETUC, KERSTEN MADE IT CLEAR THAT SUCH AFFILIATION IS NOT VIEWED FAVORABLY BY THE ICFTU BECAUSE IT "IS BOUND TO CREATE PROBLEMS." IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, HE MADE THE INTERESTING OBSERVATION THAT THE DIVISION AND RIVALRIES WITHIN THE FRENCH LABOR MOVEMENT ARE NOT THE PRODUCT OF FRENCH NATIONAL CHARACTER BUT REFLECT IDEOLOGICAL DIVISIONS IN THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR MOVEMENT. HE IMPLIED THAT DIVISION OF THE FRENCH UNIONS IS A SIGN OF HEALTH AND NOT OF WEAKNESS.

(D) HE WAS EVASIVE IN HIS REPLY TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND THE ICFTU RELATIONS WITH AFL-CIO. HE VOLUNTEERED, HOWEVER, THAT AS FAR AS THE ILO IS CONCERNED THE ICFTU WAS ENCOURAGED BY LAST JUNE'S ILO CONFERENCE WHICH AVOIDED POLITICAL ISSUES AND SAW THE ELECTION OF WESTERN CANDIDATES TO ALL IMPORTANT POSTS.

3. COMMENT: ANTOINE LAVAL, FO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, TOLD LABATT THAT BOTH HE AND BERGERON WERE QUITE PLEASED BY KERSTEN'S VISIT AND HIS STATEMENTS AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE. HE REGRETTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE PRESS CONFERENCE WAS NOT VERY WELL ATTENDED AND DOUBTED THAT THERE WOULD BE ANY REPORTS ABOUT THE VISIT IN THE PRESS. HE WAS RIGHT AS FAR AS THE MORNING'S PAPERS ARE CONCERNED. HOWEVER, LE MONDE DID INCLUDE A SMALL ITEM ON PAGE 29 WHICH QUOTES KERSTEN TO HAVE SAID THAT: "THE POSITIONS TAKEN BY CGT IN ITS VARIOUS PRESS ORGANS BELITTLED THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE ICFTU AFFILIATES DO NOT FACILITATE CONTACTS AND RAPPROCHEMENT." RECALLING THAT WITHOUT COMMON LANGUAGE THERE CAN BE NO COMMON ACTION, KERSTEN IS REPORTED TO HAVE CALLED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ATTENTION TO THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES THAT EXIST BETWEEN THE ICFTU AND THE WFTU.
RUSH

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